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THE PROBLEM OF THE PHILIPPINES

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As colonizers, in the practical acceptation of the word, Americans are not and never can be successful, because of their too idealistic aspirations. Despite the general belief that the acquisition of the almighty dollar is the height of our ambition, the aims of all American military expeditions, throughout our entire history, have been absolutely altruistic—always for the elevation of the downtrodden or the relief of the victims of former tyranny. We have constantly endeavored to create self-respecting, self-supporting citizens, capable of appreciating liberty, and of intelligently exercising that greatest of all blessings, self-government.

Can history furnish a parallel to America's disinterested emancipation of Cuba from Spain, undertaking a war with a power once so great that it dominated the world, shedding the blood of its freeborn citizens, and expending a round billion from its treasury with unexampled prodigality. Then, after stamping out tyranny, the conquest was completed and the island was put in sanitary condition, and transferred to a liberated people, giving them their lands, their cities and their homes, together with a promise of protection from other powers through the Monroe doctrine, without saddling the country with a financial claim of indemnity for one single cent. Would this have been the policy of the other great colonizing countries of the world? The recent example of the so-called "Powers" in Africa does not tend to prove it. Since the wonderful discoveries of Livingston, which imparted so great a stimulus to the possibilities of that country, there has been going on in that vast domain, a carnival of territorial lust unprecedented in history. It culminated about twenty years ago in the so-called partitioning of the continent by the powers, who, in their division of the spoils, followed, like the robbers of feudal times,

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

And what has been done there in the name of civilization to justify this wholesale loot, this robbery of a continent? Very little, beyond the systematized collection of taxes so onerous as practically to reduce the natives to abject servitude. No consideration was paid to the natural geographic lines of the continent, its mountains or rivers, its tribes, its commerce, or its potentialities; and in this monstrous bargain, the rights of the natives received no more consideration than did those of the monkey.

A similar spoliation, on a somewhat smaller scale, would have occurred with the Middle Kingdom after the Boxer war, had not the diplomacy of Europe been defeated. The allied armies of eight nations were there waiting, watching each other like hungry buzzards, for the final dissolution of the sick man of the far East, when, they thought, another opportunity would offer for a renewal of their feasting on the carcass, and for an extension of their territorial spheres. But the ringing policy of John Hay, demanding the preservation of the entity of China, and the maintenance of the policy of the open door, won, and the people of that unhappy land were rescued from the fate of the helpless and almost hopeless African of to-day. And let it never be forgotten, they were rescued by America.

On the occasion of the second and recent outbreak in Cuba, when internal dissensions disturbed the peace and order of that country, and made an army of intervention necessary, did America take advantage of the opportunity to seize that gem of the Antilles to make it tributary to its treasury?

And the Philippines, did we seek them for territorial aggrandizement? God forbid! They fell to us as the unexpected, but legitimate result of war, and by treaty, paid for with clean American gold. Twice I have visited these islands, once as an active participant in the wretched war that began in 1898, and which is likely to continue intermittently for centuries if the testimony of almost every army officer who has served there can be accepted, or if we remain there for so long. But since our occupation, has the real motive of America been selfish?

Of the hundreds of millions sunk in that land of treachery and savagery, it is doubtful whether America will ever reap the benefit of so much as the price of the homeward passage for its army. Was it a stepping-stone for the trade of the Orient that we

retained possession? The oldest and most respected American merchant in China, one who has spent forty years in the Orient, and has represented his government in various important capacities, said to me while discussing this point:

"As well might America regard the Bermudas or the Canary Isles as stepping-stones for the English, French, or German trade of Europe, as to acquire the Philippines for the advancement of trade in the East. Instead of a help they are a direct menace, requiring protection and causing international jealousies; and in case of war would be a constant source of gravest danger because of their great distance from our base."

Is it for gold that our thousand school teachers are now drawing salaries to educate these semi-savage, deceitful Malays, tainted with Spanish cross, who for centuries will be unable to eradicate the treacherous and cowardly instincts of their race? "By the same path must ye walk" is true to-day as it was two thousand years ago. The continuity of history cannot be broken; a people cannot break with its past; immemorial heredity must be remembered. To suppose that from the low-bred Filipino there could be evolved in a single generation one worthy or competent to exercise self-government, is to defy every law of anthropology and natural selection, and to indulge in the wildest optimism. Is it possible to believe that such a creature—the natural product of his tropical environment—whose evolution has taken ages for the development of the instincts of cunning and treachery, and of the characteristics and qualities that have enabled him to preserve his existence in the land of the tiger and the viper—could be suddenly translated into a self-governing citizen? The Anglo-Saxon of temperate clime has required many centuries of natural selection to evolve from his savagery. As the cave-man, he too was full of ferocity, guarding his home and his family and his life. Evolving from the dark ages through feudal days, assisted by the teaching and traditions of the Church, the example of Greece and Rome, and the Free Cities of Europe, profiting by the lessons of the Reformation, the influence of the thought of great leaders like Erasmus, Luther, Gustavus Adolphus, by long wars for the vindication of right, by Magna Charta, the printing press, the drama, the French Revolution, and our own revolution; through all these things he gradually developed from ignorance and superstition into a thinking, self-governing

man. But this development required a thousand years—the golden thousand since creation—to free him from his ignorance and mortal serfdom, and to prepare him to rule himself. Is the African or Malay savage so infinitely the intellectual superior of the Caucasian, that he can emerge from his savagery into this sphere of civilization, and attain this rich inheritance in a single decade? Is this self-governing ability (which is not yet over-developed among us—as the resident of any great American city must confess), to be hypodermically injected in concentrated essence into the ignorant, treacherous, low-bred Filipino, by bullets, or prayer-books, or school-houses, in a generation, to qualify him for beneficent assimilation? The suggestion is preposterous.

I believe the most practical solution of the Philippine problem—if the American people are foolish enough to continue their extravagant experiment there, or if we are not relieved of the responsibility of the islands by neutralizing them, or through some foreign complication—is to allow them to follow the course of natural selection through the importation of the Chinaman. His exclusion from these islands was a diplomatic blunder, comparable only with the treatment of the Oriental on our Pacific coast at the instigation of the sandlot orators, charlatan politicians, and the yellow journalism of California. When I was last in the Philippines, there were somewhat over one hundred thousand Chinese there, who formed by far the most industrious class of the inhabitants. The Chinese Mestizo (half Chinese and half Filipino) is acknowledged to be superior to the Eurasian, or Mestizo of Oriental cross—Japanese, Hindoo, or Bornese. Many of them were wealthy bankers or merchants. Others were engaged as compradors or clerks, banking houses employing them almost to the exclusion of all other nationalities on account of their quick wit, sterling honesty, industry, and individual merit. As in the Hawaiian Islands, they formed the most valuable element of the population. The Chinese Hawaiian half-caste is the keenest business man, and the most industrious citizen to be found in those islands. The exclusion of the Chinese laborer in that land will do inestimable damage in retarding industrial and commercial development. Despite his fanaticism when directed by ignorant rulers, he has shown his superiority over other Orientals in his untiring industry, his domesticity, and his honesty. In the large foreign houses, or business houses of China and Japan,

he was the trusted employee in places requiring responsibility. When put in competition with the Bornese, the Filipino, the Cingalese, the Hawaiian, the Japanese or the Indian, he invariably wins, as may be seen by his rise from poverty to wealth and influence in the cities of Singapore, Calcutta, Sandakan, Manila, Honolulu, or Yokohoma. It is time America recognized that, in the great race of civilization, and the greater race for the survival of the fittest, the nation that has preserved the integrity of its government for over six thousand years, that has witnessed the rise and fall of the civilizations of Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, that can claim the discovery of the compass, of gunpowder, the game of chess, and the printing press, and that gave birth to that great philosopher who, five hundred years before the coming of Christ, propounded and exemplified the doctrine, do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you, is more to be respected for its virtues than feared for its vices. The presence of the Chinaman in the Philippines—with the substitution of its characteristics of honesty, domesticity and industry, for the dishonesty, laziness and treachery of the Filipinos,—will do more to promote the industrial development and the civilization of these islands than any other factor, and the sooner America appreciates this fact and acts upon it, the more prompt will be her relief from her present embarrassing position.

Uncle Sam has paid, and is paying dearly, for his experiment and the privilege of protecting the trade of his distant possessions for the benefit of England, Germany, and Japan. Some day he will tire of the constant drain on his treasury and his army, and remove these islands from the arena of politics, and the natural law of evolution will prevail—and many there are who will welcome the coming of that day.

When these facts are remembered, the world will be justified in its characterization of our Oriental development. Foreigners are watching the progress of our colonial experiment there with keenest interest. And I believe, unless our policy is changed, it will prove a lamentable failure and, therefore, establish a disastrous precedent for the attempted elevation of the blacks. This will be the more unfortunate, because the experiment radically differs from all others, in that its aims are purely altruistic.